

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 03845 201854Z

45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /122 W

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P R 201700Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3836

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

US MISSION USNATO 2185

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3845

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, YO

SUBJECT: ITALO-YUGOSLAV EXCHANGES ON ZONE B ISSUE

REF: TRIESTE 21 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. RECENT ERUPTION OF POLEMICS BETWEEN ROME AND BELGRADE OVER STATUS ON ZONE B AND QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY IN GENERAL HAVE RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN ITALIAN PRESS FOLLOWING RELEASE OF YUGOSLAV COMMUNIQUE ON SUBJECT MARCH 16. PROXIMATE CAUSE OF DISPUTE, ACCORDING ITALIAN FOREIGN OFFICE, WAS INSTALLATION ON YUGOSLAV SIDE OF DEMARCATION POINTS DIVIDING ZONES A AND B OF SIGNS DENOTING YUGOSLAV TERRITORY. ITALIANS REACTED TO THIS UNILATERAL MOVE WITH STIFF PROTEST NOTE WHICH PRODUCED HARSH YUGOSLAV REPLY AND PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE ON SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. FONOFF OFFICIAL (PIETROMARCHI) RESPONSIBLE FOR YUGOSLAV AFFAIRS HAS GIVEN US RUNDOWN ON LATEST ROUND OF RECRIMINATIONS OVER ZONE B AS SEEN FROM ITALIAN SIDE. ACCORDING PIETROMARCHI, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ROME 03845 201854Z

YUGOSLAVS IN LATE JANUARY WITHOUT WARNING OR CONSULTATION

ERECTED NUMBER OF SIGNS BEARING LEGEND "YUGOSLAVIA RFS-SLOVENIA RS" AT THREE MAJOR CROSSING POINTS BETWEEN ZONES A AND B. FOLLOWING PARLIAMENTARY INTERPELLATIONS FROM MSI (NEO-FASCIST) DEPUTIES ON FEBRUARY 4, FONOFF ASKED YUGOSLAVS ORALLY FOR EXPLANATION OF THEIR ACTION AND DEMANDED THAT SIGNS BE TAKEN DOWN (AS SIMILAR SIGNS DENOTING STATE BOUNDARY HAD BEEN REMOVED BY YUGOSLAVS SOME 10 YEARS AGO). RECEIVING NO REPLY AND WITH OFFENSIVE SIGNS STILL IN PLACE, FONOFF POLITICAL DIRECTOR DUCCI CALLED IN YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR AND HANDED HIM ITALIAN NOTE ON MARCH 11.

3. BURDEN OF NOTE, ACCORDING PIETROMARCHI, WAS A) GOI CONSIDERS INADMISSABLE ANY CHANGE IN TERRITORIAL STATUS QUO AND B) NEITHER PEACE TREATY NOR LONDON MEMORANDUM GAVE YUGOSLAVS RIGHT TO EXTEND TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER FORMER ITALIAN TERRITORY, NOW KNOW AS ZONE B. PIETROMARCHI REMARKED THAT RELATIVELY STRONG LANGUAGE OF ITALIAN NOTE WAS DEEMED MERITED BOTH BY UNILATERAL AND PROVOCATIVE NATURE OF YUGOSLAV ACTION AS WELL AS BY BELGRADE'S FAILURE TO RESPOND TO ROME'S ORAL DEMARCH. AT SAME TIME, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ITALIAN CLAIM OF RESIDUAL RIGHT TO ZONE B IMPLICIT IN MARCH 11 NOTE WAS FIRST SUCH ASSERTION SINCE STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER PELLA, SHORTLY AFTER CONCLUSION OF LONDON MEMORANDUM IN OCTOBER, 1954. PIETROMARCHI ALSO RECALLED THAT WHILE GOI HAD SIGNED LONDON MEMORANDUM ASSIGNING ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OVER ZONES A AND B RESPECTIVELY, ITALIAN PARLIAMENT HAD NEVER RATIFIED ACCORD.

4. FOLLOWING MARCH 11 NOTE, YUGOSLAVS MAINTAINED SILENCE ACCORDING TO PIETROMARCHI, UNTIL THEY WENT PUBLIC WITH THEIR NOTE OF MARCH 15 AND COMMUNIQUE OF MARCH 16 ALLEGING THAT ITALIANS WERE RAISING IRRENDENTIST CLAIMS ON YUGOSLAV TERRITORY AND SUGGESTING THAT REOPENING OF TERRITORIAL ISSUE MUST BE SEEN AS EFFORT TO UNDERMINE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN EUROPE. IN REPLY TO YUGOSLAV PROTEST NOTE OF MARCH 15, ITALIANS PLAN TO DENY THAT GOI HAS CLAIM ON YUGOSLAV TERRITORY AND AT SAME TIME REITERATE FULL ITALIAN RESPECT FOR PROVISIONS OF PEACE TREATY AND LONDON MEMORANDUM. ITALIAN REPLY WILL ALSO NOTE THAT LONDON MEMORANDUM PROVIDES ONLY FOR DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN ZONES. NOTE WILL END WITH WISH FOR GOOD RELATIONS. COMMUNIQUE TO BE ISSUED APPROXIMATELY SIMUL-

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PAGE 03 ROME 03845 201854Z

TANEOUSLY WITH DELIVERY OF ITALIAN REPLY TO YUGOSLAVS WILL BE ESSENTIALLY ALONG SAME LINES.

5. BY PURSUING FOREGOING COURSE, ITALIANS HOPE TO TAKE HEAT OUT OF PRESENT DISPUTE WHILE AT SAME TIME TAKING STAND WHICH WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO ITALIAN PUBLIC OPINION. HOWEVER, AS PIETROMARCHI POINTED OUT, UNDERLYING YUGOSLAV MOTIVES IN MAKING PUBLIC ISSUE OF DISPUTE ARE BY NO MEANS CLEAR AT THIS POINT AND IT IS

CONCEIVABLE THAT BELGRADE MAY DEEM IT IN ITS INTEREST TO KEEP
THE CAULDRON BOILING.

6. AS FINAL REMARK, PIETROMARCHI MENTIONED THAT SOVIET EMBASSY
HAD BEEN PRESSING SINCE MONDAY FOR APPOINTMENT TO RECEIVE
BRIEFING ON DISPUTE. HE EXPECTED TO SEE SOVIET COUNSELOR TODAY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, BORDER CONTROLS, COMMUNIQUEs, DIPLOMATIC NOTES, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME03845
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740059-0023
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740329/aaaabavw.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TRIESTE 21 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <06 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ITALO-YUGOSLAV EXCHANGES ON ZONE B ISSUE
TAGS: PFOR, IT, YO, (PIETROMARCHI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005